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Letter dated 25 August 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 25 August 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 25 August 1997 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 13 August 1997 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative to the United Nations (A/51/962-S/1997/645).

At the outset, I wish to underline that the repeated references by the Greek Cypriot representative to the "Turkish occupied area of Cyprus" in his letter in question rely on propaganda and misinformation which paints a severely distorted picture. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not a territory under occupation, but it is the homeland of the Turkish Cypriot people.

Cyprus was indeed under occupation prior to 1974, but this was the Greek invasion of Cyprus as unequivocally declared by the late Archbishop Makarios in his speech before the Security Council in July 1974 in the immediate aftermath of the bloody coup d'état staged by Greece and its collaborators in Cyprus in order to achieve Enosis - the union of the island with Greece. It was this invasion and occupation by the Greek-Greek Cypriot camp and the armed campaign between 1963 and 1974 to bring Cyprus under Greek domination that led to the legitimate intervention by Turkey, which was carried out in accordance with its rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. The Turkish intervention saved the Turkish Cypriots from total annihilation and prevented the forcible annexation of Cyprus to Greece. The Turkish Cypriot people are grateful to Turkey for the effective security guarantees which are vital for the preservation of peace and stability on the island.

Ever since the legitimate Turkish intervention on 20 July 1974, the Greek Cypriot administration has embarked on a massive propaganda effort in misleading world public opinion on all aspects pertaining to the Cyprus issue. The letter of the Greek Cypriot representative containing a barrage of false accusations against the Turkish Cypriot side in relation to the archaeological sites and churches in Northern Cyprus constitutes an example of such flagrant propaganda effort.

The Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus attaches great importance and priority to the protection of the cultural heritage of Northern Cyprus, utilizing its limited resources in the best possible way in this direction. In addition to repairing and restoring the archaeological monuments and sites to their original condition, within budgetary constraints, the authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have also effectively employed a universally accepted method of preservation through putting these sites into every day use wherever applicable.

Greek Cypriot allegations of looting or desecration have already been refuted by foreign experts and observers who have visited the island on various occasions to study the situation. The Rev. John B. Taylor, a distinguished member of the World Council of Churches, who visited Northern Cyprus in

December 1974 and in February 1975, found no evidence to support any of the Greek Cypriot allegations. Observers such as Jacques Dalibard of UNESCO, the Rev. Lars Carlzen, the Bishop of Stockholm and Senator Ymerus Van Der Werff of the Council of Europe have all visited Northern Cyprus at different times and have made it publicly known that the Turkish Cypriot authorities are indeed doing the utmost in preserving the cultural heritage of Northern Cyprus.

The Greek Cypriot side cannot gloss over this fact or conceal its own responsibility for the carnage, gross discrimination and religious intolerance which swept through Cyprus during 1963-1974. The armed onslaught on the Turkish Cypriot people, which began in December 1963, not only resulted in hundreds of Turkish Cypriots being killed and thousands rendered homeless, but also led to the deliberate destruction of over 100 mosques, shrines and other precious Ottoman and Islamic antiquities all around the island.

It is noteworthy that even religious property of Christian origin did not escape the wave of plundering and looting by the Greek Cypriots during this period. Rina Catselli, a Greek Cypriot writer and politician, in her published memoirs records of the following episode of the Greek-Greek Cypriot coup d'état of July 1974:

> "The Presidential palace was destroyed afterwards to cover up the fact that it had been looted. Works of art were plundered from the Archbishopric by the henchmen of the Greek Junta. My God! Nothing is sacred to these people."

Against this background, we are confident that it will not escape the attention of the world community that the Greek Cypriot side is more and more preoccupied with propaganda stunts rather than acting in a spirit of accommodation and mutual respect, which is a prerequisite for alleviating the crisis of confidence between the two peoples on the island.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLÜMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus